# JOURNAL OF DEMOCRACY

## How Democracies Emerge

*Thomas Carothers* ■ *Sheri Berman*

## Revolution Reconsidered

*Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr.*

## The Perpetual Crises of Democracy

*Guillermo O'Donnell*

---

*Benjamin Reilly* on the Asia-Pacific
*Gideon Maltz* on Presidential Term Limits
*Thomas B. Pepinsky* on Malaysia
*Axel Hadenius & Jan Teorell* on Paths from Authoritarianism
*Gideon Rahat* on Candidate Selection

---

## The Mexican Standoff

*Andreas Schedler* ■ *Luis Estrada & Alejandro Poiré*
*Jorge G. Castañeda & Marco A. Morales*

# LESSONS FROM EUROPE

## Sheri Berman

**Sheri Berman** *is associate professor of political science in Barnard College of Columbia University. She is author of* The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century *(2006).*

Few serious observers today doubt that democracy is the best form of modern political governance. Solid scholarship has shown that democracies are less likely to abuse their own citizens, rarely if ever wage war upon one another, and do at least as well as other regimes in promoting economic development. Unlike during much of the twentieth century, when radicals on both the right and the left were skeptical of democracy's value, today the most important political discussions concern not whether it is desirable but rather how to promote and nurture it.

In this regard, a long-running debate has pitted what might be called "preconditionists" against "universalists." The former believe that democracy generally emerges from a particular set of conditions and experiences, while the latter claim that it can come about in all sorts of ways and settings. During the 1950s and 1960s, the debate was dominated by the preconditionists, who stressed the importance of various national prerequisites and deep structural factors such as levels of socioeconomic development, degrees of socioeconomic equality and group polarization, patterns of land ownership or agricultural production, or the prevalence of certain beliefs or cultural traits. Where certain configurations of these factors were present, successful democratization was likely; where they were absent, it was unlikely. Policy makers, the preconditionists argued, needed to take this into account, and accept "the disagreeable, perhaps even tragic, fact that in much of the world the conditions most favorable to the development and maintenance of democracy are nonexistent, or at best only weakly present."[1]

In contrast, universalists contended that democracy could emerge through diverse paths and flourish in diverse circumstances. They be-

lieved, as Dankwart Rustow put it in 1970, that scholars should "aban-don the quest for 'functional requisites'" and be skeptical of the idea that a "minimal level of economic development" or particular types of societal structure are "necessary prerequisites for democracy."[2] The "third wave" of global democratization that began in 1974 gave a strong push to the universalist view, as the shift from authoritarian to demo-cratic rule was made in dozens of countries—including many that pre-conditionists would not have considered ripe for such a move. As a result, scholarship began to focus less on the *structures* supposedly associated with successful democracy and more on the *process* of demo-cratic transitions.

This new perspective on democratization, in turn, led to a corre-sponding engagement with democracy promotion as a foreign-policy issue. Since "democratization is triggered mainly by political factors," the activists contended, "given the precarious balance of political and social forces in many newly democratic and transitional countries, in-ternational actors would appear to have real scope to influence the course of political development."[3] The result was the emergence of various organizations specifically devoted to democracy promotion and sup-port. Western governmental and nongovernmental organizations directed more and more funding—climbing into the billions of dollars annually—toward a vast range of targets across the globe.

By the late 1990s, however, as few new democratic transitions had been taking place and some of the earlier ones had even stalled or re-versed, weariness and disappointment began to set in. The Clinton administration had made democracy promotion a highlight of its agenda; in keeping with the times, the George W. Bush administration took office in 2001 pledging a "humbler" foreign policy and more emphasis on traditional great-power relations.

The 9/11 attacks shifted the ground yet again, leading many to see democracy promotion as more important than ever. To the Clinton team's arguments that democracy was a positive good, the newly zealous Bush team added the notion that the *lack* of democracy was dangerous and a potent source of anti-American radicalism. They saw democracy pro-motion as not simply a worthwhile discretionary activity, but the neces-sary solution to the urgent security problems posed by tyranny and terrorism. Despite what the preconditionists might have argued, these new universalists claimed that it was precisely the sickest patients—the authoritarian regimes of the Muslim Middle East—that it was most im-portant to cure. They were convinced that democracy could thrive where it had never before existed. Indeed, they seemed to believe in a "shock-therapy" or "Big Bang" approach,[4] in which the key to democratization was the removal of the authoritarian elites standing in its way, after which the structures and institutions of democracy would develop spon-taneously out of the desire of all peoples for freedom and self-rule.

The post-9/11 Bush administration's approach has been epitomized by the Iraq war. But as Iraq's postwar democratic experiment has floundered—and as democratic elections in Lebanon and Palestine have empowered radical Islamists such as Hezbollah and Hamas—the Bush team's approach has come under attack as being both naïve and reckless. One consequence of this has been the rise of a new crop of preconditionists. They acknowledge that democracy may indeed embody all the wonderful qualities claimed for it, but insist that in practice it flourishes only where certain conditions are in place and a particular developmental path has been followed. Fareed Zakaria argues that democratic experiments embarked upon in countries with no history of liberalism (meaning the rule of law and a state willing and able to protect individual freedom) are likely to run into trouble.[5] Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder stress the "dangers that can arise when democratic transitions do not follow an auspicious sequence," one in which "the strong political institutions that make democracy work (such as an effective state, the rule of law, organized parties . . . and professional news media)" develop before democratization occurs.[6]

> *The new preconditionists consider themselves to be realists. Ironically, the problem with their view is that it is not very realistic at all.*

Preconditionists tend to believe that indiscriminate democracy promotion is ill advised, because the result in inauspicious cases is apt to be not progress but instability and illiberalism. Zakaria, for example, is explicit in his support for authoritarian regimes in many situations, not least because he believes that they are more likely than weak democratic ones to create the prerequisites for successful democratization later. Mansfield and Snyder argue that "ill-prepared attempts to democratize" countries "where the institutional requisites for successful consolidation are not yet in place . . . may lead to costly warfare in the short run, and may delay or prevent real progress toward democracy over the long term."[7]

Pointing to the ebbing of the third wave and the problems encountered in Mesopotamia and the Levant, the new preconditionists consider themselves to be realists. Ironically, the problem with their view is that it is not actually very realistic at all. It champions a developmental model that has been extremely rare in the past and remains so today. The history of almost all democracies has been filled with turmoil, conflict, and even violence. The main lessons this history teaches, in fact, are ones that do not mesh easily with either the simple universalist or simple preconditionist perspective: All sorts of countries can indeed undergo successful democratic development, it turns out, but the process is usually long and painful for even the most fortunately positioned

of them. Understanding past cases is thus a crucial step in putting today's discussions of democratization and democracy promotion into their proper intellectual and historical context.

## Democracy's Backstory

The best way to understand how stable, well-functioning democracies develop is to analyze the political trajectories that such countries have actually followed. For the most part, this leads to an examination of Western Europe and North America.[8] Indeed, many have long regarded England in particular as the exemplar of the sequence or type of political development most likely to lead to a stable democratic outcome—a type that features gradual change, with liberalism and a well-functioning state emerging before the transition to democracy. The United States, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries are often placed in this category with England as well, though many scholars have questioned how well any of these countries actually fits this developmental model.[9] Among contemporary mature liberal democracies, very few have followed anything like the purported English developmental path. Instead, most have backstories that turn out on inspection to be as turbulent and unprepossessing as anything that the contemporary developing world has to offer.

In Europe, the modern struggle for democracy began with the French Revolution in 1789. Just as the twentieth century's third wave of democratization was greeted with jubilation by observers around the world, so too was the collapse of the hereditary authoritarian regime in France seen by many contemporaries as signaling the dawn of a new era. Supporters across the continent began to dress like the Jacobin revolutionaries, while intellectuals rushed to Paris to be part of the great progressive upheaval. As the English poet William Wordsworth wrote in Book 6 of *The Prelude,*

> But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
> France standing on the top of golden hours,
> And human nature seeming born again.

Everyone soon learned a basic lesson of transitology, however: Getting rid of an authoritarian regime is one thing; creating a stable democratic one is something else altogether.

The problems started almost as soon as France's *ancien régime* began to fall apart. The first real attempt to construct a new political order came in 1791, with the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy with limited suffrage—the type of moderate reform that scholars applaud but publics rarely find satisfying. Both reactionaries and radicals objected, and the latter prevailed. In 1793, King Louis XVI was beheaded and a republic was declared, with universal suffrage and a commitment to a

broad range of civil and political rights. Europe's first modern democracy had come into being.

It was not to last long. Vowing to eradicate democracy's enemies within as well as without, the new regime soon found itself at war both at home and abroad. In 1793 and 1794 came the Reign of Terror; historians estimate that 20,000 to 40,000 people were executed for "counter-revolutionary" activities. Looking back now in "disillusioned horror," Wordsworth saw it as a time when

> . . . [A]ll perished, all—
> Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks
> Head after head, and never heads enough
> For those that bade them fall.[10]

This is not what most people had hoped for from the transition, and by 1799 an alienated and exhausted France submitted to a coup led by the young general Napoleon Bonaparte.

In the space of a decade, France had moved from hereditary dictatorship to democracy, to war and domestic chaos, and then back to dictatorship—albeit in the new and perhaps even more ominous form of a military dictatorship. Yet despite French democracy's rapid and inglorious collapse, its legacies were powerful and long-lived. One such legacy was a barrier to any revival of traditional absolutism. Attitudes and expectations had changed, and reforms instituted during the revolutionary period undercut many of the socioeconomic and political structures that had supported the old regime.[11] Even when a new Bourbon king, Louis XVIII, took over from Napoleon in 1814, he ruled under a constitution that provided for a two-chamber parliament; granted suffrage to men of means; and established equality before the law, freedom of the press, and other civil liberties.

Another, less positive legacy was an extremely divided society—and as has often happened since, these divisions manifested themselves in political instability and violence. Unable to gain full control of the situation and worried about the possibility of a "White Terror" unleashed by reactionaries, Louis XVIII (d. 1824) and his successor Charles X (both younger brothers of the guillotined Louis XVI) resorted to increasing repression and sought an alliance with religious conservatives, who were granted substantial control over education, cultural affairs, and public morals in return for their support. This trend culminated when Charles X appointed Jules de Polignac, a religious fanatic, as a top minister in 1829. The government's resulting extremism and disconnect from popular needs sparked a civil war the following year.

In the end, Charles X was shipped off to exile and replaced in 1830 by a fairly moderate and liberal political order under a new king from the House of Orléans, Louis-Philippe. The new regime tried to diminish the power of the clergy and aristocracy while expanding the suffrage to

include the middle (but not the lower) classes. Yet such a course—one which might now be called "liberal authoritarian"—once again met with rejection by broad swaths of French society. Reactionaries, democrats, and the lower classes alike all found reasons to resent it, and ultimately it proved unable even to satisfy sectors of the middle class. The result was renewed instability and violence. By 1848, pressure for political change had reached a critical juncture in France as well as in much of the rest of Europe.

## The Revolutions of 1848

Political unrest took relatively peaceful forms at first, with French middle-class groups organizing "reform banquets" featuring antiregime rhetoric and discussions of alternative policies. The Orléanist monarchy tried to ignore the discontent, but as that became more difficult, it switched to trying to shut it down. This served only to inflame ever-growing sections of the population and fuel more and larger confrontations. One such skirmish between a crowd and government troops ended with the death of forty people. With these killings, Paris exploded. Faced with growing violence, the king fled to England.

Just as it had six decades earlier, the collapse of the French regime in 1848 sent political shock waves across Europe. From the Netherlands to Switzerland and from Scandinavia to Italy, protestors took to the streets demanding political change. Even the continent's seemingly sturdiest dictatorships proved vulnerable. In the Austrian Empire, for example, Emperor Ferdinand found himself forced to abandon Klemens von Metternich (who had essentially run the Empire for decades), accept reforms that undercut the privileges of the imperial nobility, and give the Empire's constituent nations elected national assemblies. Ferdinand's Prussian counterpart King Frederick William IV, meanwhile, had to promise to call a national assembly and accept a reform constitution. As one scholar notes, "the events in Prussia seemed to complete and make definitive the collapse of absolutism" in Europe.[12]

Although the protestors of 1848 were united in their opposition to the existing authoritarian and semiauthoritarian orders, they disagreed on much else. Once again, therefore, it proved easier to bring down old regimes than to stabilize new ones. More than eight-hundred delegates from across the German-speaking lands met in Frankfurt in May 1848 to convene the first democratically elected parliament in German history, which issued a "Declaration of Fundamental Rights" calling for freedom of speech and religion, equality before the law, and representative government. But radicals and moderates disagreed over whether to call for the establishment of a republic, while other factions battled over whether the new country should include Austria. Frederick William IV simply bided his time, recognizing that the longer the reformers argued

and dithered, the stronger his position would be. When the Frankfurt parliament finally offered him the crown of a new, liberal, and united Germany in April 1849, he turned it down, dismissed the parliament, and crushed the uprisings that broke out in response.

In France, meanwhile, the newly elected National Assembly was determined to prevent any outbreaks of disorder or radicalism. The Assembly called out the National Guard to deal with workers who were demanding sweeping political and economic reforms. By the time the dust settled, about 4,500 people had been killed and 12,000 arrested. This allowed the government to maintain control, but only at the price of alienating large sections of the working and lower classes. When presidential elections (under universal suffrage) were held in December 1848, the populist Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (the previous Napoleon's nephew) emerged as the winner.

Louis-Napoleon began to weaken the republic by circumventing its institutions and appealing directly to the people. After the Assembly refused to revise the constitution to allow him a second four-year presidential term, he decided to attack the legislature head-on. In December 1851, he had forces loyal to him occupy Paris and arrest his opponents. After brutally suppressing uprisings against this self-coup, he offered the public a plebiscite to ratify his rule. A majority ultimately allowed him to remain in office, and in the coming months he promulgated a new constitution. This gave France a sort of populist-authoritarian political system in which the president's term of office and powers were greatly extended and the powers of the legislative branch concomitantly diminished.

## Toward the First World War

By the beginning of the 1850s, the democratic wave that had swept the continent in 1848 had largely receded. But as before, significant legacies were left behind. For the first time, many Europeans had witnessed the convening of democratic parliaments and had come together to demand political change. This proved insufficient to sustain democracy, but authoritarian rulers were put on warning that if they ignored the demands of their increasingly mobilized and politically savvy populations, they would be doing so at their own peril. And indeed, the late nineteenth century turned out to be a period of significant political ferment in Europe.

In Italy and Germany, processes of national unification returned questions of political representation to the top of the political agenda. In Italy, unification was more or less complete by the 1860s; the new country was ruled by what would now probably be referred to as a liberal (although not a democratic) regime, which featured a constitutional monarchy, parliamentary government, and a lower house elected by

limited suffrage. The regime, however, proved unable to deal with the new country's myriad problems and became mired in its own special form of corruption and inefficiency, termed *transformismo*. Growing frustration and dissatisfaction led to decades of instability, extremism, and even violence.

In Germany, the unified Reich that came into being in 1871 after Prussia's military defeat of France had what would now probably be characterized as a soft or liberal authoritarian regime. The Prussian king, now promoted to kaiser (caesar), was given sole control over foreign policy but had to share domestic authority with two legislative bodies: a more conservative Bundesrat (composed of delegates from Germany's constituent states, whose suffrages ranged from broad to severely restricted) and a democratically elected Reichstag. The kaiser ruled indirectly through a chancellor (who needed parliament's approval to pass important legislation but not to stay in power) and with a fairly efficient civil service that operated in the context of the rule of law.

This political halfway house began running into trouble even before Otto von Bismarck, the architect of German unification and the Reich's first chancellor, was pushed into retirement in 1890. Growing sectors of the population became increasingly frustrated by their inability to induce the government to respond to their needs and demands. The regime attempted to silence advocates of political change (such as social democrats and Catholics), but this ultimately served only to solidify and increase these groups' political support. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these groups and others used their growing popular support and voice in the Reichstag to increase pressure for political reform.

By 1914, parties favoring political liberalization and even democratization had the backing of most voters. But with this trend came another, more disturbing one: In response to the perceived lack of responsiveness of national political institutions, increasing numbers of Germans began to turn away from the national political arena and toward increasingly polarized and often extremist civil society groups.[13] The result was that by the eve of the First World War, Germany faced governmental deadlock, rising social tension, growing political alienation, and a willingness on the part of some conservatives to embrace risky military adventures in order to divert the public's attention and head off impending democratization.[14]

The decades preceding the First World War saw growing political dissatisfaction and pressure for political change in other parts of Europe as well. The Austrian (or after 1867, Austro-Hungarian) Empire, for example, responded with significant reforms, including the establishment of parliamentary government and the widening of the suffrage in Austria; the resurrection of provincial legislatures; and a reinstatement of the 1848 constitution in Hungary. But these moves did not satisfy

critics, and thus by the start of the First World War, the Empire's political structures and practices were already coming under mounting stress.

Spain was also experiencing political instability and transition. Having decided to depose the queen in 1868, the country could not agree on who or what should replace her. The result was a brief republican interlude from 1873 to 1874, followed by a new constitution in 1876. This constitution was modeled roughly on the key laws undergirding the unwritten British constitution, and featured restricted suffrage, a two-chamber parliament, and government ministers responsible to the legislature. Like many of its contemporary counterparts, however, this regime proved unable to deal with the country's problems and even made things worse by consistently ignoring the demands of the lower classes—thus spawning growing instability and violence.

In France, military defeat at the hands of the Germans and the resulting fall of Louis-Napoleon set off battles within French society and led to the Paris Commune's March to May 1871 takeover of the capital. Like the original Communards of the Revolutionary-era Paris city government eight decades before, the latter-day Communards demanded radical change while ignoring many of the practical problems facing the country. This allowed the Commune's opponents to recoup support and organize a military assault on Paris. By the time the dust settled, 20,000 were dead, the Commune had been extinguished, and the country set about once again trying to reconstruct a functioning political order. The Third Republic was established in 1875, and in the ensuing decades managed to safeguard and expand civil and political liberties; improve conditions for workers; and carry out important educational, cultural, and economic reforms. But its functioning was hindered by continued hostility from conservative, monarchical, and religious forces, as well as by the deep political and social divisions that plagued the country and would later explode in the bitter Dreyfus Affair of 1894 to 1906.

## The Stars Align

By the time that the First World War began in 1914, Europe had already experienced decades of rising political discontent, growing political mobilization, and deepening social divisions. Significant changes had occurred, but few countries had been able to make the transition to full political democracy. The war itself had dramatic but mixed political effects. Its end brought the collapse of the old order and helped to create a democratic wave that would sweep across Germany, Austria, Sweden, Poland, Finland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other countries (including at first even Russia, albeit with gains later to be catastrophically reversed by the Bolshevik Revolution). But the war's consequences and aftermath bequeathed to these new regimes and their inexperienced publics vast challenges: the reintegration of huge num-

bers of veterans into peacetime society; economic devastation, inflation, and sometimes an obligation to pay reparations; paralyzing political divisions; violent oppositional movements of both right and left; and, for the losers, national humiliation.

Not surprisingly, many of these young democracies were simply overwhelmed. Most of them turned out to be weak, and many were plagued by growing political violence. The results are well known. Italy collapsed into Fascism starting in 1922, with Germany falling into National Socialism, and Spain and Austria into civil war and dictatorship in the 1930s. Others—including a still seriously divided France—were weakened and left easy prey for the Nazi war machine that Hitler first unleashed against Poland in 1939. By mid-1940, Britain was standing in near-desperate isolation against the Nazis, while the democratic wave that had swept the continent just a generation earlier was little more than a memory.

In fact, it was only with the end of the Second World War in 1945 that Europe's protracted struggles with democratic development finally came to an end (and even then, only in the Western half). It now seems clear that the war and its aftermath created perfect conditions for the consolidation of democracy. The continent's old authoritarian regimes were completely defeated and in many cases replaced with relatively long-term occupations; authoritarianism more generally was discredited and its social, political, and economic support largely undermined; the world's strongest democracy—the United States—made a clear commitment to political and economic reconstruction; and European publics themselves, after having sampled various alternatives, recognized that democracy was the superior political option.

As they went about building their new regimes, European nations were able to draw on a great deal of democratic experience. Even in places such as Italy and Germany where homegrown dictatorships had ruled, key institutions and practices of democracy—political parties, parliaments, local governments, and a free press—left over from previous periods of political liberalization were available for reclamation from the ashes and a new lease on life. With the stars finally in alignment, the battle for democracy that had begun in Europe a century and a half earlier was at last brought to a successful close.

## The Twisting Path to Democracy

What does this brief historical survey show? If nothing else, it reveals that the hard-edged versions of both the preconditionist and the universalist perspectives are misguided. Democracy developed in various ways and in various local contexts across Western Europe. But it never came easily, peacefully, or in some straightforward, stage-like progression.

Even the cases most often heralded as closely meeting Weberian "ideal types" of democratic development had far more trouble reaching a stable and mature democratic endpoint than many recognize. Contrary to popular belief, the development of democracy in England had a very turbulent backstory—once you take into account the intensely violent period of the English Civil War (with intermittent fighting from 1642 to 1651), followed by Oliver Cromwell's republican but dictatorial Commonwealth (1649–53) and then Protectorate (1653–59), a period of overt one-man rule first by Cromwell and then by his son Richard, whose May 1659 resignation set the stage for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660.

> *The idea that a gradual, liberal path to democracy exists and that it makes sense to discourage countries that do not follow it from democratizing is a chimera based on a misreading or misinterpretation of history.*

As Barrington Moore, Jr., and others have noted, without the violence and disruptions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England (the last major land battle fought in the British Isles was at Culloden Moor near Inverness, Scotland, in 1746), the peaceful development of democracy during the nineteenth century would not have been possible.[15] Did England avoid so much of the turbulence that Europe experienced from 1789 to 1914 because England had endured so much of its own turmoil in the seventeenth century?[16] For its part, the United States required the Civil War (1861–65)—far and away the bloodiest conflict in its history—to place it on the path of true democracy, and then another century for its national state to bring democratic rights and freedoms to the entire population.

The idea that a gradual, liberal path to democracy exists and that it makes sense to discourage countries that do not follow it from democratizing is a chimera based on a misreading or misinterpretation of history. Although such a path is certainly attractive in theory, there are in fact very few cases of stable and well-functioning democracies that have developed in this manner. Indeed, the political backstory of most democracies is one of struggle, conflict, and even violence. Problems and even failures did not preclude the success of democracy; in retrospect, problems and failures can even be seen as integral parts of the long-term processes through which nondemocratic institutions, elites, and cultures are delegitimized and eventually eliminated, and their democratic successors forged. Many contemporary analysts do not seem to realize this because of a lack of historical perspective: They often ignore or misread the frequently messy and unattractive manner in which the current crop of stable democracies actually developed.

It should hardly surprise us that many young democracies today are proving to be weak, ineffectual, illiberal, and often little more than

arenas for extraparliamentary and even violent contestation. Many coun-
tries' first or early experiments with democracy were not smooth, so
why should today's fledglings be that different? If it took France—the
birthplace of modern European democracy—more than 150 years and
significant amounts of violence to achieve a set of stable and successful
democratic institutions, why should democracy be expected to consoli-
date itself in many other parts of the world within just a few years? As
was the case in France and in other parts of Western Europe, such failed
experiments might well turn out to be crucial parts of long-term pro-
cesses involving cultural learning and institution building—processes
that eventually allow democratic governance to emerge and flourish.

The universalists are certainly correct to stress that good things such
as peace, freedom, and prosperity have their best chance to blossom and
grow under democracy, and to insist that its absence can indeed con-
tribute to extremism and even terrorism. The preconditionists are also
right, however, to insist that making democracy work is a painstaking
project and that the initial democratization of formal institutions is but
the first stage of a long and arduous process. In the end, policy makers
concerned with democracy promotion face a choice between two op-
tions. Their first option is to turn their backs on progressive political
development, adhere to the chilly calculus of authoritarian stability,
and hope that any fallout happens well after their watch and without too
much blowback. The second option is to accept that many new democ-
racies are likely to prove uninspiring or even to fail, and to acknowledge
that most outside efforts will have at best a marginal impact on democ-
ratization or democratic consolidation; knowing these suppositions,
they can still decide to provide support, recognizing that stable democ-
racy is something likely to develop over the long term only in fits and
starts and possibly with much turmoil. The sad truth is that in politics,
as in economics, there is no free lunch.

## NOTES

1. Robert A. Dahl, "The Democratic Mystique: How the United States Miscon-
strues Central America," *New Republic,* 2 April 1984. Some classic "preconditionist"
works are Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*
(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960); Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation
and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); and Gabriel Almond
and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five
Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

2. Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,"
*Comparative Politics* 2 (April 1970): 352.

3. Larry Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments,
Issues and Imperatives* (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1995), 60–61.

4. For an explanation of the "Big Bang" approach by one of its advocates, see
Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first*

*Century* (New York: Putnam, 2004). For Barnett's brief definition of the "Big Bang," see *www.thomaspmbarnett.com/glossary/htm.*

5. Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003). Francis Fukuyama similarly argues that "weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems" and believes that societies characterized by such a state are incapable of sustaining well-functioning democracies (or economies). Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004).

6. Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

7. Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight,* 3, 265.

8. Outside the West, the East Asian "tigers"—especially South Korea and Taiwan—have been touted as exemplars of this developmental type that purportedly leads to stable democracy. Some have posited that in these cases, all the preconditions for democracy (such as the rule of law, a strong state, and economic development) were in place before the transition occurred. In addition, many have given credit for the establishment of these preconditions to the authoritarian regime that preceded the transition, thereby lending credence to the view that robust authoritarian regimes are better than weak democratic ones at promoting the infrastructure of democracy.
The most obvious problem with these cases is their anomalous nature: For every South Korea there is a North Korea, and for every Taiwan there is a Zimbabwe. In other words, there are many more examples of predatory, illiberal authoritarian regimes dead set on holding on to power and exploiting their societies than there are of authoritarian regimes laying the foundations of democracy and then peacefully wafting themselves onto the dust heap of history. As with the European cases, a lack of historical perspective also often characterizes analyses of these countries. South Korea's political history, for example, did not begin in 1972, when Park Chung Hee became dictator; in the years after the Second World War, the country experienced the Korean War (which among other things was a bloody civil war) of 1950 to 1953; a democratic but short-lived Second Republic (1960–61); and a period of at least partial democracy after 1961. Thus it seems odd to portray South Korea as having followed a gradual, liberal political-development path under the beneficent stewardship of an authoritarian regime.
A similar tendency tends to pop up in the case of Chile, another relatively successful third-wave democratizer: Much of the credit for both economic and political success is given to the authoritarian regime under Augusto Pinochet that preceded it. This ignores Chile's long, pre-Pinochet history of democracy, as well as the fact that its state had long been considered one of the strongest and most effective in Latin America. See Arturo Valenzuela and Lucía Dammert, "A 'Left Turn' in Latin America? Problems of Success in Chile," *Journal of Democracy* 17 (October 2006): 66–67.

9. The literature questioning the still commonly held idolization of English political development is large. Two good places to start are David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Peculiarities of German History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

10. As cited by Adam Gopnik, "Headless Horseman: The Reign of Terror Revisited," *New Yorker,* 5 June 2006, 80.

11. In particular, the Revolution decimated the French nobility and dispossessed the Catholic Church of its land and greatly diminished its power.

12. Gordon Craig, *Europe, 1815–1914* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 132.

13. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49 (April 1997): 3, 49.

14. Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967); Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975); and Eckert Kehr, *Battleship Building and Party Politics in Germany, 1894–1901* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Whether such concerns actually drove German foreign and military policies during the summer of 1914 is hotly disputed; on the controversy, see John A. Moses, *The Politics of Illusion* (London: George Prior, 1975).

15. Hence Moore titled his classic discussion of English political development, "England and the Contributions of Violence to Gradualism." This was the first chapter in his seminal work, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon, 1966).

16. The scale of the bloody turmoil that England and the rest of Britain experienced was vast. Historian Simon Schama estimates that by the time what he calls "the first round of the British wars" was over in 1660, the loss of life due to the strife (including those who perished from hunger or disease) throughout England, Scotland, and Wales was at least a quarter of a million. Adding an estimated 200,000 people who died in Ireland through similar war-related causes leads Schama to conclude that "the toll of life, expressed as a proportion of the 5 million population of the British archipelago, is still greater than Britain's losses in the First World War (1914–18)." Schama, *A History of Britain, Volume II: The Wars of the British, 1603–1776* (New York: Hyperion, 2001), 13.

Diane Purkiss notes that "One in four of all men served in the armies on one side or the other [in the English Civil War], which suggests that a majority of able-bodied men was involved." Purkiss, *The English Civil War: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers, and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 3.